

112 • THE TIWI TODAY

177 feuding system departed and the Tiwi community became more centralized,
 611 especially around the Bathurst Island Mission, the utility of the old band
 614 organization diminished and the underlying clan organization dominated. Sud-
 621 denly, fighting was no longer in terms of band membership, for the matrilineal
 clan had become the only social unit of significance.

Today young Tiwi often deny that they have any band membership. But it is not unknown for teen-age Tiwi males to lie awake at night counting up the members of their matrilineal clan. According to informants, in the [578] 1940's and 50's the major fights which occurred at Bathurst Island Mission were interclan skirmishes.

177 Thus, among the Tiwi, we have an example of how a society with a
 611 patrilineal emphasis under strong influence from another society with a patrilineal emphasis may, if there is an underlying matrilineal organization, become a society which is for all practical purposes solely matrilineal. The introductory student of anthropology is thereby warned that characterizations of societies as matrilineal or patrilineal are rarely adequate to form the basis for reconstructing past or predicting future forms of such societies.

Tiwi and the Australian Nation

648 Finally, let us consider those aspects of modern Tiwi life which attract national attention in Australia. What do the newspaper-reading members of the Australian public know about the Tiwi?

Probably the best known Tiwi is a male in his thirties, formerly known to other Tiwi and local residents of Darwin as Bobby Wilson. About 1953, an Australian movie producer, Charles Chauvel, went hunting for a "full-blood" aborigine who could act well enough to portray an aboriginal male in what became the Australian movie "Jedda." In Darwin, the producer found a football star from the Darwin group of Tiwi who could fill the part. Bobby Wilson soon was billed as Robert Tudawali.³ He went "on location" at several spots in the Territory and finally traveled to Sydney for the studio shooting. The Sydney papers caught his story and spread his bearded face over the country. Bobby Wilson's photo from the local newspaper was hung up in several native huts at Bathurst Island Mission. After much publicity, he ultimately returned to his wife and their hut in the Bagot Native Compound in Darwin. Again the newshounds caught his story. According to them, he had returned to a life of degradation. The Australian public was shocked that a star of one of their best films should be discarded to live again like every other aborigine in Darwin. Tudawali was "rescued" and given a second role in another Australian film.

177 Bobby Wilson was only one of a large number of young Tiwi who are
 526 recognized as fine athletes. There are two football teams in Darwin which have
 648 Tiwi members: the Catholic team, St. Mary's, which often takes the local

³ The last name Tudawali is an attempt to spell the Tiwi word for shark.

TIWI AND THE AUSTRALIAN NATION • 113

pennant, and the Wanderers, which draws from the permanent native population in Darwin and includes such Tiwi as Bobby Wilson. It is normal for one of these Tiwi players to be considered among the top three in Darwin football circles. 177 526 648

For a while, Edmund, a Tiwi from Bathurst Island Mission, was one of the players on the newly organized St. Mary's basketball team; other Tiwi have played on the Bagot Compound basketball team. Billy Larrakeyah, a Darwin Tiwi, was thought to have Olympic potentialities as a javelin thrower, but strained his arm in the try-outs.* Most recently, a group of young Catholic Tiwi has been organized into a water polo team called the Seals. National magazines suggest that they may be the best water polo team in the country, but so far they have not gone south to play any non-Darwin group.

Tiwi carving and painting have had recent popularity in Australian art circles. Traditional Tiwi graveposts are finely carved in geometric designs and painted with precise and complex networks of cross-hatching and other simple, but effective, motifs. The first modern innovation in Tiwi art occurred about 1945 when a native known as Katu (or Short Katu) made his first attempt to carve a human figure atop a mourning post. When Pilling later asked Katu why he had carved this post, he said, "Me see 'm along Darwin. Me savvy." That is, Katu transferred the concept of Western realistic statuary in the round into the Tiwi art form. He carved a second realistic post for presentation to Queen Elizabeth II in 1954. More recently, Tiwi carvers at Snake Bay have taken to realistic carving. Two figurines, both carved by Tiwi at Snake Bay, were given to the Perth Museum in 1958. Sixteen mourning posts from Snake Bay were purchased by the National Art Gallery in Sydney the same year. An art display of Tiwi carving has been held in the United States in Philadelphia. 177 532 322

Tiwi have received recognition in the Northern Territory for other art forms. One of the thirty-year-old female Tiwi at Bathurst Island Mission usually takes first prize for embroidery at the annual Territorial fair. There has also been interest shown by outsiders in the double-barbed ceremonial spears. Male Tiwi skill in dancing has attracted wide attention in Australia. When natives from all over the Territory were sent to dance before Queen Elizabeth in Queensland during her 1954 tour, three Tiwi were among the delegation. The Tiwi contingent, directed by the innovator Short Katu, made every news story covering this part of the Royal Visit. In Darwin, when Bagot Compound needs to raise money for native participation in sports, the Tiwi, usually led by Katu, present a public dance. As a result, Katu's clan under his direction has invented many new dances for white Australian audiences. 177 531 177 535 648

Perhaps we may look forward to the day when American television audiences can enjoy such a Tiwi dance, one of Australia's best native products. Yet only sixty years ago, and therefore in the lifetime of many people still living, very few Tiwi had even seen a white man, and white men who set foot on Tiwi soil, like Cooper in his first attempt in 1897, were ferociously chased out.

* He was killed in a brawl in Darwin in the spring of 1959.